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# Garvin, David Berry, 1943-2014 (MSS 547)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
Department of Library Special Collections  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 547      GARVIN, David Berry, 1943-2014

8 boxes. 64 folders. 1,522 items. 1958-2015. Originals, photocopies, photos.

SC2015.46.1

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David Berry Garvin was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on 1943 February 22, the second child and only son of Charles Cromwell & Martha (Berry) Garvin. He attended the Western Training School and graduated from College High in 1961. He attended Vanderbilt University and graduated from Western Kentucky University; he furthered his education by taking classes at Harvard Business School. He was a member of Bowling Green's First Presbyterian Church and the E.Q.B. Literary Club.

In early- 1940s, David's father, Charles T. "Charlie" Garvin purchases Beech Bend Park, which adjoined the family farm. That began a long career in family recreation for both Charlie and David. Beech Bend Park eventually grew to become a nationally known amusement park and raceway and one of Kentucky's largest tourist destinations. David was instrumental in helping develop the International Race Track at Beech Bend.

David worked at Beech Bend from the time he was 12 years old. In his early 20's, while still working at the park, David founded Camping World (1966), a company which serviced the growing number of people who owned or rented recreational vehicles. Headquartered in Bowling Green, Camping World grew into an important mail order business and eventually opened 100 stores nationwide and employed 5,000 employees. David sold Camping World in 1990 to dedicate more of his time to developing a thoroughbred horse farm at his Ironwood Farm.

Besides his business interests, Garvin maintained an avid interest in historic preservation. He purchased and restored Ironwood, the historic home of Joseph Rogers Underwood on the Barren River near Beech Bend Park. He also restored the Old Richardsville Road Bridge and the College Street Bridge, Garvin also supervised the development of the adjacent river park. Challenging CSX Railroad, Garvin almost singlehandedly persuaded the railroad behemoth to strip the old silver paint of the Barren River railroad bridge and allow the metal to oxidize therefore making it more attractive at this busy entrance to the city. Garvin and his son David renovated the rear of the old Bowling Green Armory into an attractive apartment building.

Besides his development and management of Camping World, David also undertook several land development projects in the Bowling Green area, including the building of Sugar Maple Square, a retail shopping center, on Highway 185, northwest of Bowling Green. He was

also heavily involved in conceptualizing land use for a commercial recreational vehicle haven in Franklin, Kentucky, Garvin's, that was to include several national chain stores, a recreational vehicle museum, amusement rides, and an area for camping. Although Garvin purchased large tracts of land along Interstate-65 near Franklin and met with a number of interested parties, the development did not reach fruition.

Garvin married Charlotte Mann in 1969. They had four children: Katherine, Kimberley, David, and Arthur. Garvin died on 30 August 2014 at the age of 71.

## COLLECTION NOTE

This collection documents the life of David Berry Garvin, particularly several of his land development and business projects. Box 1 contains a variety of materials including his 1961 high school diploma, news clippings, correspondence and photographs. Of particular interest is a document drafted by Garvin in the late-1980s titled "20/20 Vision Statement" in which he outlines what he anticipated for the future of Bowling Green, Kentucky, and includes comments related to transportation, economic development, education, recreation, art and culture. Folder 11 includes a number of Ironwood Farm's horse photographs. Folder 15 includes information about Beech Bend Park, including several brochures, an annual pass form 1971, a marketing study from 1988 and a business plan from 1981, and a map/information sheet for camping guests. Box 2 contains calendars and part of a diary for 2013-2014. This material is restricted and cannot be viewed until May 1, 2024.

Box 3 contains information about Camping World, including a corporate profile (Folder 1). The Kentucky Library Research Collections owns a large run of Camping World catalogs, but Folder 2 includes several specialty catalogs. Folder 3 includes a press packet for Camping World produced in 1984 which includes several press releases as well as publicity photographs. Folder 4 includes notes from a strategic planning session, and Folder 5 contains some miscellaneous items such as early Camping World stationery.

Boxes 4 and 5 contain information about a land development project along Interstate-65 near Franklin, Kentucky. It includes correspondence, photographs, reports, maps, etc. related to that project. Material related to specific retailers and vendors that Garvin approached are indicated by the folder headings in Box 5. Folder 12 contains information about Garvin's lobbying efforts to legalize gambling in Kentucky.

Box 6 includes material about other land development and retail projects in which Garvin was involved, chiefly a retail shopping center named Sugar Maple Square on Bowling Green's northwest side. It contains marketing information collected by Garvin from residents related to what they desired in a local shopping center.

Boxes 7 and 8 document Garvin's funeral. Box 7 includes several funeral books in which attendees were allowed to write their personal remembrances about Garvin, and Box 8 includes a large number of sympathy cards and notes received by the Garvin family, as well as floral tribute cards and a funeral program. Of note are several certificates that indicated trees were planted in honor of David's life. Because Garvin loved trees, the family specified that people plant trees in David's memory in lieu of sending funeral flowers.

## SHELF LIST

BOX 1	David Berry Garvin	1958-2015	684 items
Folder 1	Inventory		2 items
Folder 2	Diplomas and report card	1958-1969	4 items
Folder 3	Fort Dix – pictorial yearbook	1966?	1 item
Folder 4	News clippings	1913-2011	83 items
Folder 5	Correspondence with David & Charlotte Garvin	1982-2015	38 items
Folder 6	Awards – Certificates and programs	1968-2015	23 items
Folder 7	20/20 Vision statement	1988-1992	4 items
Folder 8	Bridges – College Street	2004-2006	49 items
Folder 9	Bridges – CSX	n.d.	25 items
Folder 10	Bridges – Old Richardsville Road	1988-1989	109 items
Folder 11	Horses – Photos	n.d.	40 items
Folder 12	Miscellaneous	1978-1991	9 items
Folder 13	Berry family items	2014	7 items
Folder 14	Donnelly and Garvin photos	1997-2010	17 items
Folder 15	Beech Bend items	1971-1984	9 items
Folder 16	Beech Bend slides	1970-1979	117 items
Folder 17	The Great Family Plan	1982-1988	39 items
Folder 18	Items from 50 <sup>th</sup> birthday	1993	61 items
Folder 19	Wedding and identification documents	1965-1992	9 items
Folder 20	Letters to Garvin from his mother, Martha B. Garvin	1953-1988	27 items

Folder 21	Oversized items C2, D1, #2	1969-2005	11 items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- U.S. Army Reserves Commission</li> <li>- Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine (9 May 1971) – Beech Bend Story</li> <li>- Nashville Tennessean (1 Aug 1976) – Beech Bend story</li> <li>- Grit (12 Sept. 1976) – Story about Beech Bend</li> <li>- Campvention News (1 July 1984) Bowling Green, KY</li> <li>- Exit 6 interchange map Franklin, KY (11 May 2005)</li> <li>- Garvin's Conceptual Site Plan Franklin, KY</li> <li>- Painting of cows sitting at soda shop bar (used for mural at Brown Dairy on Hwy. 185)</li> <li>- Appointment by Brereton Jones for Garvin to serve on the Kentucky Commission on Tax Policy, 1995</li> <li>- Appointment by Brereton Jones for Garvin to serve on the Kentucky Economic Development Partnership Board, 1995</li> <li>- Certificate of completion of the Owner/President Management Program at Harvard University, 1985</li> </ul>		
BOX 2	Calendars Restricted until May 1, 2024	1969-2005	8 items
Folder 1	Calendar – Restricted	2007	1 item
Folder 2	Calendar – Restricted	2008	1 item
Folder 3	Calendar – Restricted	2009	1 item
Folder 4	Calendar – Restricted	2010	1 item
Folder 5	Calendar – Restricted	2011	1 item
Folder 6	Calendar – Restricted	2012	1 item
Folder 7	Calendar – Restricted	2013	1 item
Folder 8	Calendar – Restricted	2013-2014	1 item

BOX 3	Camping World	1985-1987	29 items
Folder 1	Camping World: A Corporate Profile	1987	1 item
Folder 2	Camping World – “Hard to Find Parts Catalog”	n.d.	2 items
Folder 3	Camping World – Press Packet	1984	16 items
Folder 4	Camping World – Strategic Planning	1993	2 items
Folder 5	Camping World – Miscellaneous	1985	8 items
BOX 4	Franklin Land Development Project	2005-2009	95 items
Folder 1	Franklin land development correspondence	2005	24 items
Folder 2	Franklin land development correspondence	2006	48 items
Folder 3	Franklin land development correspondence	2007-2009	23 items
BOX 5	Franklin Land Development Project	1964-2009	251 items
Folder 1	Franklin land development – Bible Park USA	2008-2009	14 items
Folder 2	Franklin land development – Cabela’s	2006-2007	54 items
Folder 3	Franklin land development – Ferris Wheel	2005-2006	4 items
Folder 4	Franklin land development – Home Depot	2006	7 items
Folder 5	Franklin land development – Land use proposals, maps, etc.	2005-2009	8 items
Folder 6	Franklin land development – Photos Aerial	2006-2008	13 items
Folder 7	Franklin land development – Pilot Truck Stop	2005-2006	10 items
Folder 8	Franklin land development – Recreational vehicle dealer/ exhibit	2005	26 items
Folder 9	Franklin land development – Road construction	2006	10 items

Folder 10	Franklin land development – Stradtner land	1964-2008	17 items
Folder 11	Franklin land development – Survey information by American Engineers, Inc.	2006-2007	13 items
Folder 12	Gaming	2007-2009	75 items
BOX 6	Business Development Projects	1991-2006	243 items
Folder 1	Harley Davidson dealership	1997-2002	15 items
Folder 2	Retirement home on Lovers Lane	2005-2006	22 items
Folder 3	Sugar Maple Square – Letters of support	1991-1992	86 items
Folder 4	Sugar Maple Square – Letters of support	1994	70 items
Folder 5	Sugar Maple Square – undated support letters	[1994]	50 items
BOX 7	Funeral Books	1959-2014	14 items
Folder 1	Funeral book for Robert T. Garvin	1959-1964	9 items
Folder 2	Memorial book for David B. Garvin	2014	1 item
Folder 3	Funeral book for David B. Garvin	2014	1 item
Folder 4	Funeral book for David B. Garvin	2014	1 item
Folder 5	Funeral book for David B. Garvin	2014	1 item
Folder 6	Funeral book for David. B. Garvin	2014	1 item
BOX 8	Sympathy Cards	2014	198 items
Folder 1	Sympathy cards	2014	59 items
Folder 2	Sympathy cards	2014	48 items
Folder 3	Sympathy cards	n.d.	36 items
Folder 4	Miscellaneous	2014	55 items

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS GARVIN, David Berry 1958-2015  
547 1943-2014

Limited correspondence, calendars, photos, news clippings, and reports that document the life of Warren County, Kentucky, businessman David Berry Garvin. Includes information about Beech Bench Park, Camping World, Sugar Maple Square and an unrealized land development project near Franklin, Kentucky. Includes several memorial books from Garvin's funeral as well as a large number of sympathy cards.

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## SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Adkins, Rocky, b. 1959 – Letters to	B5,F2
Amusement parks – Bowling Green	B1,F15-16
Bar-Tur, Armon – Letters to	B5,F1
Beech Bend Park – Bowling Green	B1,F15-16
Berry family	B1,F13
Bible Park USA – Relating to	B5,F1
Blake, Francis S. “Frank”	B5,F4
Bridges – Warren County	B1,F4,8-10
Bridges – Warren County – Photos	B3,F8-10
Cabela’s – Franklin – Relating to	B1,F4;B5,F2
Callahan, Mike – Letters to	B5,F2
Campbell, David B., 1823-1913 – Relating to	B1,F4
Camping World – Related to	B3
Camping World – Photos	B3,F3
Catalogs – Camping World	B3
Certificates	B1,F6,21;B3,F5
Christmas cards	B1,F5
City planning – Bowling Green – Relating to	B1,F7
CSX Railroad – Relating to	B1F4
Diplomas – College High – Bowling Green, 1961	B1,F2
Ferris wheels – Relating to	B5,F3
Fletcher, Ernest Lee “Ernie,” b. 1952 – Correspondence	B5,F2
Funeral boods, 2014 – Garvin, David Berry	B7,F2-6
Funeral books, 1962 – Garvin, Robert T.	B7,F1
Gambling – Law and legislation – Kentucky	B5,F12
Garvin, Charles Cromwell “Charlie,” 1912-1980 – Relating to	B1,F16



Garvin, Charlotte (Mann) – Photos B1,F14  
 Garvin, David Berry, 1943-2014 – Photos B1,F3,14  
 Garvin, Martha (Berry), 1912-1989 B1,F13,20  
 Garvin's – Franklin – Relating to B1,F16  
 Griffin, Dennis – Letter to B5,F2  
 Harley-Davidson Motor Company – Relating to B6,F1  
 Haslam, James A., III – Letters to B5,F7  
 Historic preservation – Relating to B1,F4,8-10  
 Home Depot – Franklin – Relating to B5,F4  
 Horses – Photos B1,F11  
 Letterheads – Camping World – Bowling Green B3,F5  
 Lobbying – Relating to B5,F12  
 McConnell, Addison Mitchell "Mitch," Jr., b. 1942 B1,F5  
 Missions – Singapore, 1980s B1,F20  
 Postal service – Bowling Green B1,F4  
 Real estate development – Bowling Green B6,F2-5  
 Real estate development – Simpson County B4-5  
 Real estate development – Simpson County – Photos B5,F6  
 Recreational vehicles – Relating to B5,F8  
 Religion B1,F20  
 Report cards B1,F2  
 Retirement communities – Bowling Green – Relating to B6,F2  
 Richards, Walter D. "Jody," b. 1938 B5,F8  
 Roads – Simpson County B5,F9  
 Rudolph, Robbie – Letters to B5,F2  
 Shopping centers – Bowling Green B6,F3-5  
 Singapore – Travel and description B1,F20  
 Snodgrass, Stephen Lynn B4-5;B6,F1-2  
 Sugar Maple Square – Bowling Green B6,F3-5  
 Sympathy cards, 2014 B8,F1-3  
 Vision 20/20 B1,F7  
 Ward, George – Letters to B5,F2  
 Warren County Tomorrow Commission B1,F7

SEE or SEE ALSO

Berry, Martha, 1912-1989

See:

Garvin, Martha (Berry), 1912-1989

Jeffrey 02/11/2016